

3 March 1953

SUBJECT: Conversation with Ahrentshik, President of the Byelorussian National Council

Commenting on the Coordinating Center in Munich, Germany, Ahrentshik, President of the Byelorussian National Council severely criticized certain aspects of the activity of the Center and American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, supporting this Center.

Ahrentshik made the following points in this connection:

1. "It is regrettable that the representatives selected by the American Committee for work in Europe are totally unsuited to their position. They have no understanding of the political questions involved nor ability to handle the difficulties encountered. [] particularly, as a Russian by birth, cannot give the proper evaluation to historical developments.

2. "The American Committee and its representatives in Europe have shown lack of forethought in handling the matter of the Coordinating Center. Even the name of the organization reveals a sad absence of proper knowledge of the Russian background. The abbreviation KISAB presents a combination of consonants alien to the Slav tongue and the general practice of the Slav Peoples, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, etc., in attempting to pronounce the word is to soften it into 'Katsap'. Anyone familiar with the Slav languages is aware that 'Katsap' is a derogatory term used by other Slavs in referring to Russians. The Coordinating Center has thus become branded in the mind of Ukrainians, Byelorussians and other enslaved peoples as a purely Russian organization.

3. "A serious error made by certain representatives of the American Committee is to attempt to create artificially organizations to represent some of the oppressed peoples of the Soviet Union. These fake organizations in the formation of which specialized particular [] are representative of no authentic movement. They can be created with ease since men indifferent to the true feelings of their countrymen can be found in every group. As evidence thereof is the Russian group which centers around the publication OSTVOZHDENIIE recognised all the aspirations of the oppressed peoples of the Soviet Union, and is led by a prominent figure (a member of the former Imperial Duma), but naturally cannot be regarded as reflecting the true sentiments of most Russian exiles."

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